

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET ON 3 MARCH 2015 FROM THE RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE PANEL AT ITS MEETING ON 24 FEBRUARY 2015**

### **RP124: CABINET REPORT: TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Prior to presenting the report, the Panel received a PowerPoint presentation from the Principal Accountant.

In presenting the report, the Principal Accountant reminded the Panel that the Council was required to receive and approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy which covered:

- Capital plans, including prudential indicators.
- A Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.
- The Treasury Management Strategy.
- An Investment Strategy.
- Approval of Treasury Management Practices.

The Principal Accountant explained that the report covered the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) Prudential Code, the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the CLG Investment Guidance.

The report looked at the period 2015/2018 which fitted with the Council's Financial Plan and Capital Programme. The report was based upon the Treasury officers' views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the Council's Treasury Advisor, Capita Asset Services, Treasury Solutions.

Members' attention was drawn to the following sections of the report:

- Background.
- Reporting Requirements.
- The Capital Prudential Indicators 2015/2016 – 2017/2018.
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Borrowing Strategy 2015/2018.
- Annual Investment Strategy.
- Investment Risk Benchmarking.
- End of Year Investment Report.
- Treasury Management Practices (TMPs).
- Financial Implications.

In response to questions from Councillor Humphrey regarding local authorities investment and credit ratings being guaranteed, the Principal Accountant explained that the Borough Council applied the creditworthiness service

provided by Capita Asset Services, Treasury Solutions which used sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

Councillor Humphrey asked if the Borough Council had considered investing in the Municipal Bonds Agency. In response, the Principal Accountant explained that the Borough Council had looked at this opportunity, but had decided not to as there were no clear rates of return or timescales, therefore it would not give the Council optimum investment.

Councillor Humphrey referred to page 28, paragraph 4.3 and asked for clarification on the average rate of the fixed rate funding. The Principal Accountant explained that the loans were taken out over a 10 year period. The Chief Financial Officer added that the loans referred to were taken out following the Borough Council's stock transfer. In 2016, the Borough Council could choose to continue with the loans, or decide to borrow with an alternative organisation.

Councillor Humphrey commented that it was important to take account of market loans when the Borough Council considered borrowing or investing in the future.

The Chairman, Councillor Beal thanked the Principal Accountant for a detailed report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Panel support the recommendations to Cabinet as follows:

Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council:

- 1 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2015/2016, including treasury indicators for 2015/2018.
- 2 The Investment Strategy 2015/2016.
- 3 The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2015/2016.
- 4 Adopt the revised Treasury Management Practices (TMPs).

RP125: **CABINET REPORT: MEMBERS IT SOLUTION**

The ICT Manager presented a report which provided a proposal to move away from the current fully managed ICT solution consisting of a PC 'Wyse Terminal', broadband and telephone land line service for Members, to a combination of iPads, Citrix remote access and provision of a mobile phone, following the 2015 Elections – saving up to £62,421 over a 4 year period.

Members received an overview of the options considered for the provision of ICT following the Election in May 2015.

The Panel was informed that the report looked at lessons learned from the current provision of Members ICT and examined the results of an iPad trial undertaken by a cross section of Elected Members.

The ICT Manager provided a brief summary of some of the potential benefits as set out below:

- The facility to receive minutes, agendas and email via 'apps' straight to an iPad device.
- Cost reduction.
- Reduced ICT staff visits.
- Less ICT equipment taking up space at home for Members.

It was highlighted that the report sought to obtain a steer for 'Paperless Meetings' and asked for consideration to be given to the inclusion of a '3G' simcard, to enable iPads to be used on the move.

It was noted that the report also sought approval to issue 'Members Computer Usage Guidelines' as part of the rollout.

Members' attention was drawn to the following sections of the report:

- Background.
- Current ICT Solution.
- Current ICT Support Arrangements.
- Setting the Scene – Current Trends regarding ICT Device Usage.
- Options considered.
- Proposed Solution.
- Policy Implications.
- Financial Implications.

Councillor Manning commented that he was in favour of a paperless approach. He outlined the difficulties experienced within his area obtaining a good Broadband service and that there was currently no 3G option available. The ICT Manager explained that the idea was for Members to connect an iPad directly to a wireless router to download minutes and agendas and to access emails. He explained that it would cost the Council £1674 per annum for 3G mobile coverage for all Members. However, the provision of 3G could be looked at on an individual basis if required.

Councillor Wright stated that he found it difficult to read on screen as a whole page could not be displayed on the iPad and found it easier to use a paper copy. In response, the ICT Manager explained that the software provided would allow bookmarks to enable Members to go direct to the appropriate page and that the page could be adjusted to the size of the iPad screen.

Councillor Chenery commented that he used an iPad provided from Norfolk County Council and found it easy to use.

The ICT Manager advised that the annual savings of the printing cost amounted to £2,280 per annum. However, it was appreciated that there might be exceptions when paper copies would be provided. The Deputy Chief Executive gave an example of when there was a particularly large agenda for the Planning Committee.

The Leader, Councillor Daubney added that he appreciated that it would take time to bed in and that the new software to be provided would allow Councillors to view any documents relating to a particular meeting. The Leader explained that he had seen both the Modern Gov and Good software in operation and it was a different system than that used by Norfolk County Council.

The Portfolio Holder for ICT, Leisure and Public Space added that he had read the report thoroughly and discussed the content with the ICT Manager. He congratulated the ICT Manager and his team for the report. The Portfolio Holder referred to the Planning Committee and commented that bookmarks could be used to allow Members to go direct to a specific page, and in his opinion this approach was easier than trying to find the correct page in a paper copy of the agenda. The proposal could achieve significant savings over a 4 year period and would “free up” staff time.

Councillor Mrs Young asked if the size of the font on the screen of an iPad could be changed to allow a larger print to be displayed. The ICT Manager advised that the size of the font could be adjusted accordingly.

Councillor Humphrey commented that he used the Norfolk County Council system and found the annotation facility useful and it allowed the user to track and highlight relevant items. He asked if the Modern Gov App was downloadable.

The ICT Manager explained that the Council had looked at iannotate but had wanted a solution that was easy to use. He added that iannotate was a separate app. However, the Modern Gov system integrated all features mentioned above and allowed Members to view minutes and agendas and to access emails. The ICT Manager highlighted that it was important that Members were trained to use the technology efficiently and effectively. A number of sessions had therefore been included within the Members Induction Programme.

In response to questions from Councillor Humphrey on the annotation facilities within the Modern Gov system, the ICT Manager explained that it was possible to annotate any document within the Modern Gov system.

Councillor Mrs Young asked if there would be any issues regarding printer compatibility. In response, the ICT Manager explained that in some instances printers would be difficult to configure. However, with the iPad there were two alternatives for Members:

- A Councillor could procure a printer. When a Councillor received an iPad, a list of compatible wireless printers would be issued. ICT would assist a Councillor remotely to ensure the printer was connected.
- Another option would be for Councillors to print through the Citrix system if there was a computer available within their home.

In response to questions from the Chairman, Councillor Beal regarding printing options and ICT assisting on a remote basis, the ICT Manager explained that there was a facility to assist remotely on a Council owned iPad, however, it was highlighted that no decision had yet been taken on this service. Councillors could either bring in their iPad to ICT or telephone the helpdesk for assistance.

Following further questions from the Chairman, Councillor Beal on insurance and damage to the iPad, the ICT Manager advised that the ICT department would have spare iPads should any damage occur. With regard to the appropriate insurance cover, the ICT Manager explained that he did not have this information to hand, but would find out and forward the information direct to the Panel.

In response to comments and questions from Councillor Manning regarding the loss of a mobile phone or ipad, the ICT Manager explained that the Borough Council were governed by Central Government regarding IT security and if a mobile or ipad was lost or stolen the device would lock and valuable data would not be accessible by another person.

Councillor Humphrey asked what arrangements the Council would have in place to back up information on an iPad. In response, the ICT Manager explained that there was no provision for the backing up of information stored on an iPad. However, emails would be stored on the server at King's Court and would be retrievable. The Modern Gov software would store minutes and agendas and he explained there was the provision to save any annotated documents. If an important document needed to be saved, the Councillor could email it to his/herself and save it on the system.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that if Councillors wished to save a particular document it was possible there was a way of doing so in the Modern Gov system.

The ICT Manager explained that when a document was annotated in the Modern Gov system there was an annotated area to save such documents and he undertook to check up the back-up arrangements using the Modern Gov system and forward the information direct to the Panel.

The Chairman, Councillor Beal asked if a Councillor was given an allowance of £10 per month towards the cost of Broadband and ICT peripherals would a Councillor be issued with an iPad. In response, the ICT Manager explained that if a Councillor received the £10 allowance this would be to subsidise the cost of Broadband and to cover the printer costs, an iPad would also be issued.

Councillor Manning asked if in poor reception areas, would a Councillor need their own router to receive updates, etc. The ICT Manager advised that a Councillor could use their own Broadband to link direct to the IPad. It was, however, appreciated that the reception in some areas in Norfolk was poor and that in such areas maybe the 3G option would be provided as an alternative.

The Chairman, Councillor Beal thanked the ICT Manager for presenting the report to the Panel.

**RESOLVED:** The Panel supports the recommendation to Cabinet as follows:

Cabinet resolves

- 1) To provide each Member with an IPad tablet device, Citrix access and a mobile phone, replacing the current Council ICT solution, unless Members choose to utilise their own compatible equipment.
- 2) That the 3G option is not entered into except on an exceptions basis.
- 3) To implement an allowance of £10 per month towards the cost of Broadband and ICT peripherals.
- 4) To introduce Members Computer Usage Guidelines.